

## Worship Resources for Reconciliation Sunday 29th May 2016

In November 2006 the SA Presbytery established Reconciliation Sunday, to be celebrated across the church on the first Sunday in Reconciliation Week (27 May – 3 June annually), and requested church councils to include this in their worship calendars.

Reconciliation Week begins the day after Sorry Day (May 26th) and includes the anniversary of the 1967 referendum (May 27th) and finishes on June 3rd, sometimes known as 'Mabo Day', the anniversary of the High Court's 1992 Mabo judgement which was a major landmark in the recognition of Indigenous land rights in Australia. It also recognizes the covenant relationship with the UAICC (Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress) of the Uniting Church in Australia.

Reconciliation Week is a time to build mutually respectful relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. Achieving reconciliation involves raising awareness and knowledge of Indigenous history and culture, changing attitudes that are often based on myths and misunderstandings, and encouraging action.

This year Reconciliation Sunday falls on 29th May, 2016. The worship notes this year have been prepared by the Rev. Ian Hunter.

You are also reminded of the Annual Synod and Congress **Pilgrimage of Healing Appeal** which provides an opportunity for you to support our Aboriginal brothers and sisters in the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress. Please consider dedicating this Sunday's Offering to the Congress or advertising the Appeal to your community during the Sundays in and around Reconciliation Week (29th May and 3rd June) and even providing special envelopes. This year, the proceeds will go towards the **repairs of the old Tailem Bend Uniting Church** to fulfil the UAICC's vision for the building as a centre for their work in the Murraylands (see *New Times* April/May 2016, page 17).

For more information on the **Pilgrimage of Healing Appeal**, please contact the Congress Resource Officer Ian Dempster via email at [idempster@sa.uca.org.au](mailto:idempster@sa.uca.org.au)

The resources may also be useful at other appropriate times during the year such as NAIDOC Week (5th – 12th July).

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## Suggested Order of Service - May 29, 2016 - Reconciliation Sunday

**NOTE:** In this Order of Service we use the terms *First Peoples* to refer to the original inhabitants that God placed in this land and *Second Peoples* to refer to all those who came more recently. See notes below on Preamble to the UCA Constitution.

### Welcome:

God be with you

**And also with you**

### Acknowledgement of the Traditional Stewards:

We acknowledge the First Peoples of Australia, whom God has placed as the original custodians of this place on which we meet. We acknowledge the wisdom of their Elders, both past and present and honour their continuing culture, and pray that we might all work together for reconciliation and justice in this nation. We ask God to open our hearts and souls that we might be open to their teachings about community, walking in harmony with God's creation and offering grace to those who have caused deep harm.

### Call To Worship:

**Note:** *Baiame, Baayami or Baayama* is the Creator God or Sky Father in the Dreaming stories of several south-east language groups.

Baiame, you have given us sacred lands with rivers mountains and forests and invited us to live in harmony with all. For over 60,000 years you have journeyed with us showing us a truth that lies deep within our hearts, passed on from generation to generation to be shared with all comers to this land. We celebrate your presence and the hope that lingers within us all that one day we will be the people you dreamt us to be. Let us worship together in your name and your great dream!

### Opening Prayer:

**Note:** Wandjina are cloud and rain spirits from Australian Aboriginal spirituality that are depicted prominently in rock art. Dreamtime stories say the Wandjina created the landscape and its inhabitants. Some of the artwork in the Kimberly Region of Western Australia dates back approximately 4,000 years ago.

Wandjina, we gather in your presence to ask for wisdom and strength to be the people you have created us to be. We desire reconciliation between First and Second Peoples yet we do not always know where to start. Help us to make it a priority in our lives to reach out to each other, to hear stories, share

hopes and learn your ways together. Make us people of relationship in your name. **Amen.**

**Hymn:** TiS # 745 *Seek Ye First*

**Prayer of Confession:**

Creator God, we do not always seek you or your kin-dom first. It is too easy to think only of ourselves and our families without regard for others or the consequences of our actions. But you are calling out to us to reconcile ourselves not just with you but also to ourselves and our brothers and sisters.

We have become alienated from each other, not listening, not seeing, not speaking truth that needs to be seen and heard. Those of us who are Second Peoples have reaped the rewards of our ancestors who first came to this land as invaders, invaders who wanted a place to settle and tame. They failed to recognize the First Peoples who had deep cultures and connections with both land and God.

For over 250 years we have continued to reject the First Peoples' cultures and rights, from the first invasions, to the black line, to poisoned waterholes, nuclear testing, the taking of their children and to the continued dismantling of cultures and communities. Yet, those First Peoples who have the strength and courage to still reach out to us in hopes of reconciliation humble us.

Give us their courage, to own our wrongs, to let go of our fears that we might have done unto us as we have done unto them, and believe that through your truth and life there is hope for us all. Jesus showed us The Way. Help us to walk it in our living. Amen.

**Words of Affirmation:**

Our Rainbow God offers a covenant of love, peace and justice for all people and all of Creation. The Creator's grace frees us from our chains and gives us a chance to breathe and live again!

**Thanks be to God!**

**Passing of the Peace:**

**Children's Story:** *Two Mates* by Melanie Prewett / Illustrated by Maggie Prewett, Magabala Books, 2012

Available online from Magabala Books at <https://www.magabala.com/two-mates.html>  
\$17.95 + \$12 postage flat rate to all states. Allow plenty of time for the book to arrive, or select a story from those suggested in the notes below this Order of Service.

**Children's Hymn:** *I'm Gonna Live So God Can Use Me*  
(Season of the Spirit Song Book, volume 1, page 20)

**Scripture for this Sunday:**

1 Kings 18:20-39, Psalm 96, Galatians 1:1-12, Luke 7:1-10

Suggest you use Psalm 96 from *Everyday Psalms* by James Taylor and the Luke 7:1-10 reading as the focus scriptures for this Sunday.

Whether you take what is written in the Bible as fact, metaphor, myth or story, listen to these words now, for the meaning they hold for you on this day.

**May the world hear, may we hear, the word being read everywhere.**

**Sermon Notes:**

*The two suggested scriptures above point to a faith and trust in God over the culture that humankind has created. A turning back towards The Way of Christ that includes all people in God's grace and love. Even us, the Second Peoples, for all we have done to our Aboriginal brothers and sisters, are given a new chance to make things right. But we need to both trust and do as God says. For most of us this means simply beginning to have a true relationship with some of the First Peoples who are seeking reconciliation.*

*Our Synod has said this is a priority for us but still there is very little happening. If your congregation is involved with a reconciliation relationship, celebrate it and ask where God is leading you and what the next step is in that relationship. If your congregation is not involved or is unaware of the possibilities, investigate ways that you might begin to hear the stories and start a relationship with some First Peoples. If you are not sure where to start contact that Uniting Aboriginal Christian Congress and they will provide some suggestions.*

*Do we have the faith of the centurion that God can provide a way? Do we believe in The Way of Christ to provide Peace, Love and Justice for all? Can we enter into right relationships with First Peoples or are we afraid of the cost?*

**Hymn:** TiS # 665 *Jesus Christ Is Waiting*

**Prayers of the People:**

Baiaame, today, on this Reconciliation Sunday during Reconciliation Week, we lift up the many injustices that our First Peoples are still facing. We lift up the awareness that many people still have no choice about how they live or the means to make those choices. That many still wake up in houses without running water and proper sanitation. That children are not receiving education that helps them develop their potential and respects their culture.

That adults have no prospect of satisfying employment and good health. Helps us find justice and make sure the First Peoples have the right to a distinct status and cultures which helps maintain and strengthen the identity and spiritual and cultural practices of their communities, whether they be urban, rural or remote. That they have the right to self-determination, where Indigenous communities take control of their future and decide how they will address the issues facing them and that they have the right to land, which provides the spiritual and cultural basis of Indigenous communities.

We lift up all of our brothers and sisters of First People descent and ourselves and pray that we will find a way forward together that will be life giving for all people and Creation.

We join together with all of our family in Christ saying the prayer he taught to the disciples,

**Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be your name.**

**Your kingdom come,**

**Your will be done on earth as in heaven.**

**Give us today our daily bread.**

**Forgive us our sins,**

**As we forgive those who sin against us.**

**Save us in the time of trial**

**And deliver us from evil**

**For the kingdom, the power,**

**And the glory are yours**

**Now and forever.**

**Amen.**

**Offering:**

*It is suggested that today's offering be donated to the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress's **Pilgrimage of Healing Appeal** for their continuing work in South Australia. Alternatively, you could advertise the Appeal to your community during the Sundays in and around Reconciliation Week (29 May to 3 June) and even provide special envelopes as some churches already do. This year, the proceeds will go towards the **repairs of the old Tailem Bend Uniting Church** to fulfil the UAICC's vision for the building as a centre for their work in the Murraylands (see New Times April/May 2016, p. 17).*

**Offering Prayer:**

God of grace, use these gifts to bring peace, love and justice among all people and all of your creation in Jesus' name. **Amen.**

**Hymn:** TiS # 666 *We Are Marching In The Light Of God*

*You might consider changing the word 'marching' to 'walking'.*

**Commissioning:**

Go out with the love and justice of Christ burning in your hearts, the passion of the Holy Spirit to move you, and the Grace of God to bring you continually into right relations.

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**Alternative hymns**

TiS # 690 Beauty for brokenness (would be a great final hymn)

OR

select from the following two files which can be downloaded from the Reconciliation Sunday Resources for 2014 on the Synod SA website:

<http://sa.uca.org.au/covenanting/c-resources/reconciliation-sunday-resources>

Some Hymns and Songs for Reconciliation Sunday (.pdf file)

Music from Songs for Pilgrims (.pdf file)

**Other Resources**

[https://www.magabala.com/media/wysiwyg/Two\\_Mates.pdf](https://www.magabala.com/media/wysiwyg/Two_Mates.pdf)

Download story notes for "The Two Mates" from the link above.

The story is about relationships. How might this story link in to the gospel reading? Our reaction to the other who is different?

You are encouraged to explore other resources from the Reconciliation Sunday Resources page on the website, especially the traditional stories in .ppt format.

The Lost Children (2008)

Thukeri (2009)

The Whale Story (2013)

The Three Spears (2015)

Alternatively, select a story from *Yarta Wandatha: The land is speaking: The people are speaking* by Rev Denise Champion.

This is available from Uniting Church SA's Mission Resourcing (212 Pirie St, Adelaide SA 5000) for \$25 plus \$5 postage. Please do not send money. Ring **Bev Freeman** on (08) 8236 4243 during office hours or email [bfreeman@sa.uca.org.au](mailto:bfreeman@sa.uca.org.au) for ordering and payment details.

### **Preamble to Uniting Church Constitution**

As the Uniting Church believes God guided it into union so it believes that God is calling it to continually seek a renewal of its life as a community of First Peoples and of Second Peoples from many lands, and as part of that to recognise that:

When the churches that formed the Uniting Church arrived in Australia as part of the process of colonisation they entered a land that had been created and sustained by the Triune God they knew in Jesus Christ.

Through this land God had nurtured and sustained the First Peoples of this country, the Aboriginal and Islander peoples, who continue to understand themselves to be the traditional owners and custodians (meaning 'sovereign' in the languages of the First Peoples) of these lands and waters since time immemorial.

The First Peoples had already encountered the Creator God before the arrival of the colonisers; the Spirit was already in the land revealing God to the people through law, custom and ceremony. The same love and grace that was finally and fully revealed in Jesus Christ sustained the First Peoples and gave them particular insights into God's ways.

Some members of the uniting churches approached the First Peoples with good intentions, standing with them in the name of justice; considering their well being, culture and language as the churches proclaimed the

reconciling purpose of the Triune God found in the good news about Jesus Christ.

Many in the uniting churches, however, shared the values and relationships of the emerging colonial society including paternalism and racism towards the First Peoples. They were complicit in the injustice that resulted in many of the First Peoples being dispossessed from their land, their language, their culture and spirituality, becoming strangers in their own land.

The uniting churches were largely silent as the dominant culture of Australia constructed and propagated a distorted version of history that denied this land was occupied, utilised, cultivated and harvested by these First Peoples who also had complex systems of trade and inter-relationships. As a result of this denial, relationships were broken and the very integrity of the Gospel proclaimed by the churches was diminished.

From the beginning of colonisation the First Peoples challenged their dispossession and the denial of their proper place in this land. In time this was taken up in the community, in the courts, in the parliaments, in the way history was recorded and told, and in the Uniting Church in Australia.

In 1985 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander members of the Uniting Church in Australia formed the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress.

In 1988 the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress invited the other members of the Church to join in a solemn act of covenanting before God.

After much struggle and debate, in 1994 the Assembly of the Uniting Church in Australia discovered God's call, accepted this invitation and entered into an ever deepening covenantal relationship with the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress. This was so that all may see a destiny together, praying and working together for a fuller expression of our reconciliation in Jesus Christ.

### **A Responsive Prayer**

God of Holy Dreaming, Great Creator Spirit, from the dawn of creation you have given your children the good things of Mother Earth.

**You spoke and the gum tree grew.**

In the vast desert and the dense forest, and in the cities and at the water's edge, creation sings your praises.

**Your presence endures as the rock at the heart of our Land.**



When Jesus hung on the tree you heard the cries of all your people and became one with your wounded ones: the convicts, the hunted, and the dispossessed.

**The sunrise of your Son coloured the earth anew, and bathed it in glorious hope.**

In Jesus we have been reconciled to you, to each other and to your whole creation.

**Lead us on, Great Spirit, as we gather from the four corners of the earth; enable us to walk together in trust from the hurt and shame of the past into the full day which has dawned in Jesus Christ.**

**Amen.**

### **A Prayer for Reconciliation**

Lord God, bring us together as one,

Reconciled with you and with each other.

You made us in your likeness.

You gave us your Son, Jesus Christ.

He has given to us forgiveness from sin.

Lord God, bring us together as one,

Different in culture, but given new life in Jesus Christ:

Together as your body, your church, your people.

Lord God, bring us together as one,

Reconciled, healed, forgiven,

Sharing you with others as you have called us to do.

In Jesus Christ, let us be together as one.